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1975/04/22

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

ACTION
April 22, 1975

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MEMORANDUM FOR: GENERAL SCOWCROFT

FROM: LES JANKA for

SUBJECT: Senator Stennis' Letter on Secret Understandings on the Vietnam Peace Agreement

Senator Stennis has written the President the letter at Tab B, noting Department of Defense testimony regarding the existence of secret understandings between the United States and South Vietnam or North Vietnam relative to the 1973 Paris Peace Agreement.

The Senator asks that the Armed Services Committee be furnished the text of all understandings and exchanges with South Vietnam and North Vietnam regarding the Peace Agreement in order to clarify "the nature and extent of any prior U. S. obligations, commitments, or understandings which may have been given to South Vietnam and North Vietnam."

The President addressed this subject in both his ASNE press conference on April 16 and his CBS interview on April 21, reiterating that there exist no agreements that differ from public statements of U. S. policy in Indochina, and noting that it would not be effective diplomatic practice to release exchanges between heads of state.

The draft response to Senator Stennis at Tab A is very similar to the response we prepared to Senator Sparkman who had made the same request of the President. The response reiterates the President's assurances that "no secret agreements exist" that would require the United States to act in any way contrary to publicly announced policy, that our diplomatic exchanges with South Vietnam and North Vietnam are consistent with our public statements, and that the President will not make the documents available to the Committee.

RECOMMENDATION

That you sign the memo to the President at Tab I.

W. R. Smyser, Max Friedersdorf and Paul Theis concur. Philip Buchen concurs.

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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

April 16, 1975

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The President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

The Senate Armed Services Committee has been holding hearings on your urgent request for $722 million of additional military assistance to South Vietnam. A relevant issue which has arisen in connection with this request is the nature and extent of any prior U. S. obligations, commitments, or understandings which may have been given to South Vietnam and North Vietnam.

On April 15, 1975, Secretary Schlesinger testified that there exist official, private documents which bear on the U. S. commitment to South Vietnam. Secretary Schlesinger indicated that the Defense Department did not have these documents and in any event would be unable to provide them to the Committee in the absence of Presidential approval.

The Committee respectfully requests that all documentation which has not been formally presented to the Congress and bears on the nature and extent of the U. S. commitment to South Vietnam be provided to the Committee. This request covers all written materials regarding communications between the United States Government and the governments of South Vietnam and North Vietnam, and/or their respective representatives, including but not limited to the communications themselves and any memoranda of conversations or cable traffic reflecting conversations, that passed between the parties involved relating to the 1972/1973 Paris Peace negotiations and Agreements, and their subsequent implementation.

Due to the severe time constraints associated with this request for military assistance to South Vietnam these documents should be provided promptly.

Sincerely,

John C. Stennis

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